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News For
Our Friends
& Neighbors

SLC Dance Students Make The Everyday Extraordinary

The artistry of legendary Trisha Brown, considered to be the most widely acclaimed choreographer to emerge from the postmodern era, is being shared with students and local residents in Yonkers by the Sarah Lawrence College Dance Program.

Made possible through an “American Masterpieces” grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Sarah Lawrence students taught aspects of the dance “Line Up” in a two-week residency at the Enrico Fermi School for the Performing Arts and presented a workshop, a lecture/demonstration and a performance at Philipse Manor Hall on February 9. A performance at the Riverfront Library will take place on March 10 at 11 a.m.

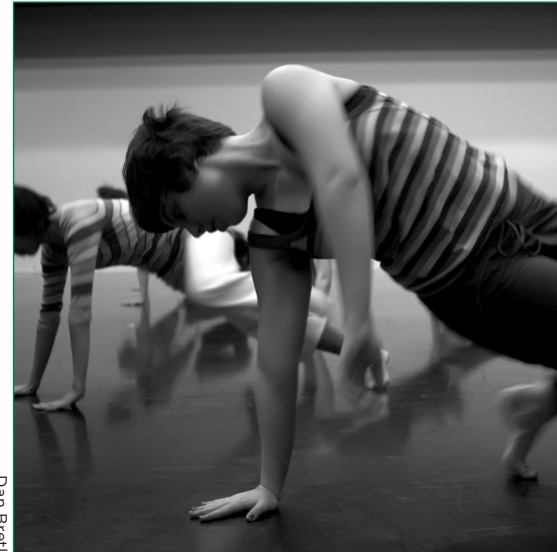
“Outreach to the community is important for dance students to gain greater sense of the work they’re doing and the impact it can have in the community,” said Kathy Westwater, a member of the Dance faculty who helped organize the program. “Exposing a lot of people — students of different ages and adults — with different backgrounds to Trisha

Brown’s work is a wonderful opportunity for us to share something very dear to dancers,” she said. “Typically Sarah Lawrence College students show their work to their peers. This program has allowed us to take the work off campus, giving the students a visceral experience in real, dynamic environments.”

“‘Line Up’ is a historic work, a masterpiece, and a great entrée into the world of dance for people who haven’t experienced it before,” said Sara Ruder, director of the College’s Dance Program.

According to Westwater, “Line Up” was created at a time when young dance groups were using new techniques incorporating everyday things they saw around them, which at the time was considered avant-garde. Today the work is engaging for people new to dance because of its use of the everyday: everyday movements, everyday sounds, such as a Bob Dylan score, and everyday clothing.

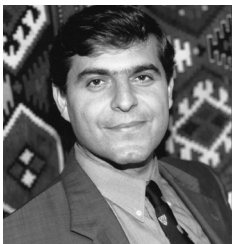
Dance magazine’s New York editor, Wendy Perron, was a member of Trisha Brown’s



Dan Brett

company in the 1970’s. Writing in *The New York Times* in 2001, she recalled her role helping to create “Line Up.” At one point as she and others were rehearsing, she beckoned Brown with her hand, saying “c’mon Trisha.” Brown incorporated the hand motion into the piece. Perron wrote: “The stream of motion can be exhilarating kinetically — and philosophically. It seems to speak of universal motion, of an inevitability that is not about fate but an embrace of the on-going-ness of life.”

SCARSDALE TURNS TO SLC’S GERGES FOR MIDDLE EAST EXPERTISE



When Scarsdale High decided to pull out of the College Board’s Advanced Placement (AP) program and establish its own college-level curriculum for advanced students, they turned to Sarah

Lawrence faculty member Fawaz Gerges to help develop a course in American Government.

Gerges, who holds the Christian A. Johnson Chair in International Affairs and Middle Eastern Studies at Sarah Lawrence,

visited Scarsdale two days this fall to meet with Scarsdale social studies faculty seeking input on the course’s segment on US foreign policy. In Scarsdale, AP has been replaced by Scarsdale’s own AT, or Advanced Topics.

Gerges visited Scarsdale shortly after returning from a 15-month stay in the Middle East, where he was based in Cairo, Egypt, and traveled extensively, gathering information for a book on contemporary Arab politics. He shared his ideas on what a college freshman needs to know about the Middle East. He suggested books that high school students should read to gain a better

grasp of the volatile region. And he stressed that to understand the Middle East, one needs to study its culture, religion, and history, including the impact of Western colonialism.

“We had a really good brainstorming session with the faculty,” says Gerges, who

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Deciphering Health Care for Seniors

Understanding the complexity of today's health-care system just became easier for Westchester County seniors confronting the Byzantine regulations of the federal government's Medicare program and the complexity of modern medicine.

Since November, seniors have received answers to their questions at the Health Advocacy Resource Center, located on the third floor of the Will I. Grinton branch of the Yonkers Public Library. The program, which is coordinated by an intern from Sarah Lawrence College's Health Advocacy Program, is staffed by volunteers trained by the nonprofit Medicare Rights Center.

The drop-in center, which operates from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, is funded by \$40,000 from Westchester County's Department of Senior Programs. A second Health Advocacy Resource Center, also to be coordinated by a Sarah Lawrence graduate student, is planned for the Shrub Oak Public Library in Yorktown.

"The library is a comfortable place where senior citizens come to congregate, read the paper, and get information," says program coordinator Marleise Brosnan, in her first year at the Sarah Lawrence Health Advocacy program. "It's a good place for us to set up camp and provide them with conduits to information they need."

At the ribbon-cutting this fall, Westchester County Executive Andy Spano

said the program would provide an essential service for the county's growing senior population.

"We have a very complicated health care system and people need to know what's available and what they should be asking their doctors," said Spano. "The program is really going to help."

The volunteers, who have received 15 hours of training by the Medicare Rights Center and another six hours from the library staff, provide consumer health information — from benefits they are entitled to under Medicare to information about certain illnesses that can be found on the Internet or in library reference books. While the volunteers don't provide answers to clinical issues concerning an ailment, learning about a particular diagnosis can help seniors ask the right questions when they see their doctor.

There has also been great confusion over the complex Medicare Part D program, which provides prescription drug coverage for seniors.

"Many seniors aren't comfortable using the Web," says Laura Weil, interim director of Sarah Lawrence's Health Advocacy Program. "So this provides them with one-on-one counseling to help them get the health care they need."

By bringing the program to the library, health advocates are hoping to reach a younger, more active senior population, says Lois Steinberg, 80, of the Medicare Rights Center, who earned her master's degree in health advocacy at Sarah



Dan Bret

HARC coordinator Marleise Brosnan, left, consults with Rita Gerstle of the St. John's Riverside Hospital cancer support group for assistance informing community-based organizations about the Health Advocacy Resource Center.

Lawrence in 2000. Steinberg says most of her workshops are done in senior centers, where the average age of participants is about 75.

Steinberg says the volunteers can help empower seniors by providing important information. She says studies show that almost 50 percent of America's seniors are functionally illiterate when it comes to understanding the health care system.

"Many people don't understand what doctors tell them," says Steinberg. "They can't ask rational questions about their condition. Once they get the information, they'll be better prepared. In health care, knowledge is power."

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FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY: MAKING THE MOST OF MINI-COURSES

Carsten Schmidt, a member of the Music faculty, lectured on "Great Traditions in Baroque Keyboard Music" to Friends of the Esther Raushenbush Library in early January. A second course: "Thinking about Putin's Russia" was taught by Philip Swoboda of the History faculty. The "mini-courses" took place over three days.



Quyen Nguyen

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE ART OF TEACHING

Teachers Connect and Reflect at Saturday Seminars

One Saturday morning, 25 school teachers met at Sarah Lawrence College's Slonim House to reflect on how children learn to read and write. As part of the 2007-08 Art of Teaching Saturday Seminars, they shared their experiences teaching literacy. They discussed an article that was critical of one popular methodology for teaching reading in schools. Then the educators convened small groups to delve deeper into these issues, providing each other with both insight and support for their work with children.

Second-grade teacher Maria Catalano came away refreshed and inspired.

"These seminars bring us together to make meaning out of what happens in the classroom," said Catalano, who teaches at Central School in Larchmont, and received her graduate degree in education at Sarah Lawrence in 1997. "It helps remind me that you have to trust yourself and trust the children."

For Catalano, the seminars are a way to remain connected to the child-centered approach to instruction taught at Sarah Lawrence's graduate education program. That approach encourages teachers to shape their teaching in response to each child's mode of thinking and learning by observing

their students and designing a course of study based on those observations. It's different from the "How-To" approach to pedagogy taught in many education schools, which proscribe specific protocols for instruction.

For others, like Sasha Davies, a third-grade teacher at Wampus Elementary School in Armonk, the Saturday seminars have shown her new approaches to instruction, which are shared in an open, caring environment.

"I've been able to find like-minded people here," said Davies. "I'm going back to my school with a different viewpoint and I made connections that were a revelation to me."

The seminars began 15 years ago when Mary Hebron, associate director of the College's Art of Teaching program, set up a workshop for Sarah Lawrence alumnae/i. Since then, the program has expanded to include teachers, like Davies, who received their graduate education degrees elsewhere. In December, about half of the workshop participants were Sarah Lawrence alumnae/i.



Dan Brett

Mamaroneck teachers Maria Catalano, left, an alumna of both the Sarah Lawrence undergraduate college and the Art of Teaching graduate program, and Darlene Adams met with Art of Teaching program associate director, Mary Hebron, in Catalano's second grade classroom at Central Elementary School in Mamaroneck to plan the Saturday

Educators say the seminars provide a different point of view from the professional development in many public schools, which tends to focus on raising student scores on standardized tests.

"They are focused on doing well on tests, but not so much on how students learn," Hebron said. "Many teachers are excited to

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BRONXVILLE RESIDENT BEQUEATHED THE GIFT OF MUSIC

Margaret Hopping, a member of one of the first families to live in Bronxville, enjoyed the cultural offerings of the colleges on both sides of her village home; she and her architect brother, Daniel, frequently attended concerts at Sarah Lawrence and Concordia Colleges. When she passed away,



just shy of her 100th birthday, the executor of her will, former Bronxville resident Heather

Bernard, and Ms. Hopping's attorney, longtime village resident, Peter Bertine, revealed that she had bequeathed \$225,000 to each of the institutions. Her bequest to Sarah Lawrence stated: "for the enhancement and advancement of concerts, programs, and other public events sponsored by the Music Department."

Honoring Ms. Hopping's wishes, the gift will be used to help underwrite the annual concert series, which presents approximately eight performances each semester by diverse artists of widely varying styles. "We are touched and delighted with this gift," said music program director, Chester Biscardi. "It is encouraging and affirming that a member

of our local community was so appreciative of Sarah Lawrence's musical offerings that she chose to bequeath to the College a gift that will help support and nourish our Concert Series. It will be an enormous help to us in bringing exceptional guest artists to the College for the benefit of our students and the larger community."

Ms. Hopping also bequeathed an equal sum to Lawrence Hospital.

An interesting footnote: Ms. Hopping's house on Midland Avenue was one of the first built by William Van Duzer Lawrence, the College's founder.



Terry Brandon

Student string quartet members, from left to right, Leigh Elliott, Tamara Jatton, Holly Fulton and Matthew Nestor played selections by Mozart for the 18th Century musical portion of a re-enactment of the wedding of Mary Philipse and Roger Morris at Philipse Manor Hall State Historic Site in downtown Yonkers in January.

Professional Development

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hear about a different approach, which values teachers' knowledge. It's not a formula or a grab-bag. It makes you think about what you are learning by being with the children."

This year's series includes seminars on math problem-solving, literacy, classroom management, and arts in the schools. The workshops are \$25 each, or \$100 for all four. For an additional \$100, teachers can obtain one graduate credit. Teachers can still register for "The Arts in School: Making Arts Real, Relevant, and Central in the Classroom," April 12 by emailing mhebron@slc.edu

Gerges

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has taught at Sarah Lawrence since 1994 and appears regularly on CNN and ABC to discuss Middle East issues. "They seemed deeply interested in presenting material that would provide the theoretical and intellectual foundation for the students."

Scarsdale decided to opt out of the Advanced Placement program in 2006 following a community-wide dialogue on how best to provide college-level courses to advanced high school students. As one of the nation's elite school districts, Scarsdale educators felt that the

Advanced Placement system hamstrung faculty who wanted to delve deeply into topics not covered by the national exams.

While the AP exams have served as a national standard for high-level high school courses, Scarsdale educators are confident that the school's reputation for excellence will ensure that Scarsdale students are not at a disadvantage when applying to college. Working with college teachers like Gerges will help Scarsdale's Advanced Topic classes provide a top-notch educational experience.

Social studies teacher Sue Peppers says Gerges' knowledge of Middle East politics provided insight into how the United States has wielded its power in

the war-torn region. Gerges met with students to discuss issues raised in his latest book, *Journey of the Fibadist: Inside Muslim Militancy*, explaining how the radical Islamic movement has changed over the past 30 years. He also shared tips with Scarsdale's Model UN team tasked to represent the government of Pakistan in an upcoming competition.

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